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C O N F I D E N T I A L KHARTOUM 002732

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DEPARTMENT FOR AF A/S FRAZER, AF S/E NATSIOS, AND AF/SPG
NSC FOR PITTMAN AND SHORTLEY

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/21/2016

TAGS: PGOV PREL AU SU

SUBJECT: CONTINUING EFFORTS ON COMMANDERS' CONFERENCE

REF: A. KHARTOUM 02671

¶B. KHARTOUM 02731

Classified By: P/E Chief E. Whitaker, Reason: Sections 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶11. (C) Commanders representing the SLA-Unity, G-19, SLA-Abdel Wahid Al Nur, and SLA-Ahmed Abdul Shafi continue to engage in efforts to hold a conference of Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) non-signatory commanders in North Darfur with the facilitation of the African Union (AU). A working group of international partners, in coordination with the AU, have been trying to support the commanders' initiative, and the Embassy's Senior Security Advisor is in El Fasher as part of this process (Ref A). Despite the recent military campaign in North Darfur, the commanders continue to recognize the importance of dialogue among the non-signatories and to express a willingness to meet in the near future.

¶12. (C) In a November 22 meeting with CDA Hume, AU Deputy Head of Darfur Peace Agreement Implementation Boubou Niang said that the African Union Mission to Sudan (AMIS) would facilitate transportation for commanders wishing to attend a conference, provided that the G-19 rescind a website posting indicating that they would attack AMIS helicopters in territory under their control. Representatives of the G-19 agreed on November 22 to remove the posting as a impediment to the conference. The international partners continue to encourage the AU to press the Sudanese government to guarantee security for a commanders' conference. The AU mediator for the Darfur peace talks in Abuja, Salim Ahmed Salim, will arrive in Khartoum on November 26, and the international partners will raise this issue with him at the chief of mission level. Ongoing violence in North Darfur holds the possibility of delaying the conference (Ref B).

¶13. (C) According to Niang, the AU and the United Nations will convene a meeting of non-signatory political leaders and international stakeholders within the next two weeks as part of the November 16 Addis Ababa agreement. A commanders' conference is complimentary to this effort and an important step in creating the unity among the rebel movements that is necessary for the success of a broader political process. According to a UN political advisor, the UN remains supportive of the commanders' conference. She anticipated that an agreement between the AU and the UN on implementation of the Addis Ababa agreement would be signed in the near future, at which time 30 UN advisors in Khartoum would be permitted to travel to Darfur to work with the AMIS command.
HUME